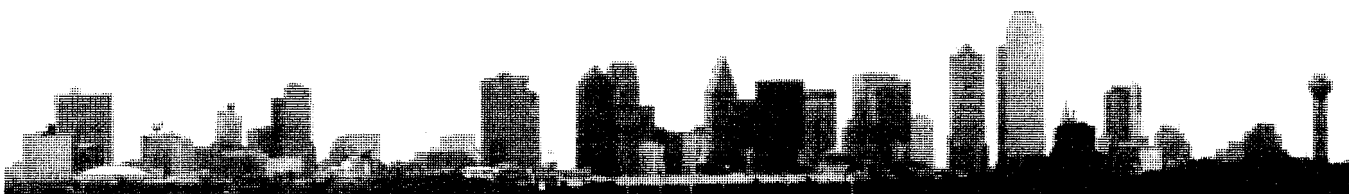


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

Volume 10 Issue 5 — May 1992

Dallas

HotLinks Editions

Three new programs & one new concept from Soft-Logik
by Bill Raecke

Well, it's here. I've been waiting for several months now, but Soft-Logik has finally released *HotLinks Editions*. *HotLinks* is a new way to tie programs together so that they can share data... that is, when you change something in one program, the information is changed in all the linked programs at the same time. What linked programs, you ask? Well, to get things rolling, Soft-Logik is packaging *PageLiner* and *BME* with *HotLinks*. That makes this a pretty significant package, particularly since the whole thing is designed to interface with the Amiga's premier desktop publishing package, *PageStream*. What that means right now is that I get to write a review on three software products rather than just one.

HotLinks — what is it? According to the manual, "*HotLinks* is a data exchange protocol for Amiga applications. It can be used to exchange text, pictures, drawings and other data between programs." Your first reaction is likely to be that ARexx is supposed to provide a connection between applications. In fact, ARexx does provide a somewhat similar function, but with some very important differences. First of all, ARexx requires some amount of programming ability. *HotLinks* is an automatic feature that anyone can use. Furthermore, *HotLinks* is able to maintain links between programs and update data in programs even when the programs aren't active. That might be possible with ARexx, but the task would be formidable.

Let's start back at the beginning with the installation. The equipment *required* is 1 meg of memory and 2 floppy drives. The equipment *recommended* is a hard drive and some extra memory (preferably on an accelerator card). Of course, if you're a *PageStream* user you already knew that, didn't you? The installation is simple enough. There is an installation script provided — of the new Commodore standard variety. What the installation script does for you is put *HotLinks*, its eight support

programs and an "Edition" drawer in the location of your choice. Two commands are then added to your user-startup... a path command so that the system can find the programs that were just added, and an assign command assigning *HotLinks*: to the "Edition" drawer that was just built so the system will know where to store the *HotLinks* data files. A note to more advanced users: You may want to move the "Editions" drawer to another location since this is where data will be written on a regular basis. Just move it to any location you like and change the assign command to match. On my system, I also decided to add the *HotLinks* to my WBStartup drawer so that it's always ready to go. If you have enough memory, that's probably a good thing to do because a *HotLinks* application won't be aware of *HotLinks* if you start it after your application. It doesn't take much memory — less than 30K.

When *HotLinks* is running, several new menu items become available in any application that uses *HotLinks*: Publish, Subscribe, Update, and Information. To illustrate how it all works, let's say you're in *PageStream* working on a piece of clipart. You get it positioned just right and then (perhaps after printing a sample page) discover that there is a black spot where there shouldn't be one. Before *HotLinks* came along, you would have to fire up *Deluxe Paint*, load in the clipart, clean it up, save it, get back into *PageStream*, delete the clipart that was there before, load in the modified clip, and then proceed to reposition and resize it like you had it before. But now there's *HotLinks*. Here's how it works now. You make sure the picture is the active object in *PageStream* and select the PUBLISH option. You will be asked for a file name. *HotLinks* will save the EDITION to the *HotLinks*: device. Fire up *BME* and SUBSCRIBE to the EDITION you just created in *PageStream*. Modify the picture as required and then select the UPDATE option from the *HotLinks* menu. When you pop back over to *PageStream* you will find that the clip has been automatically changed — no need to reload it or reposition it. Even better, it will

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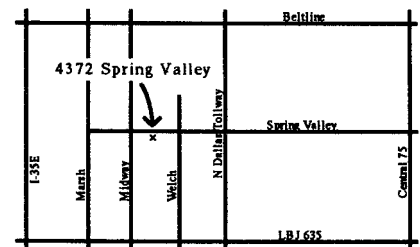
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be updated whether *PageStream* was active when you changed the clip or not. Once the link has been established to any *HotLinks* application by either the PUBLISH or SUBSCRIBE option, the document will always use the updated version of that EDITION, no matter where it was last changed — as long as the program that changed it used the UPDATE option to actually change the EDITION. To follow up on our example, if you were low on memory and had to exit *PageStream* before you could start *BME*, you would UPDATE the clip in *BME* just as before. Then you would exit *BME* and fire up *PageStream* again. When you reloaded your original document, *PageStream* would automatically detect that the EDITION had been changed and would update your document for you, substituting the revised clip for the original in exactly the same location.

Text can be handled in exactly the same way, except that text can be updated in either *PageLiner* or *PageStream*. When both have been linked to the same edition, changing one automatically changes the other as soon as the UPDATE function is invoked.

After a while, you will build up a sizable collection of EDITIONS on your hard drive. Don't delete them! I mentioned earlier that there were eight support programs in the *HotLinks* drawer along with the *HotLinks* program itself. One of them is called DelEd. This is the approved method to delete an EDITION that is no longer needed. The other support programs deal with multi-user or networked system. With *HotLinks*, it is possible to establish passwords to have access to EDITIONS, and to control who can UPDATE or SUBSCRIBE to EDITIONS. This has a lot of potential in an office environment.

PageLiner is billed as "The Amiga Text Processor". That may be as good a description as any. It's somewhat of a cross between a Text Editor and a Word Processor. A Text Editor is very much line oriented. Although some can perform word-wrapping, inserting text later means that the text must be manually re-flowed. *PageLiner* doesn't require that manual effort. Formatting is handled as easily as in a true Word Processor — and bold, italic and underlined text are supported as well. But on the other hand, *PageLiner* doesn't have all the features you would expect from a top-of-the-line Word Processor. There is no thesaurus, the spell checker could be better, there is no facility for footnotes and, most of all, there is no printer formatting. The program is set up the way it is because it is intended to be used in conjunction with *PageStream*. The features supplied complement those found in *PageStream* and there is little duplication of effort. *PageStream* can supply all the printer formatting anyone could ever desire — *PageLiner* supplies a fast interface and a clean display.

I don't intend to spend a lot of time going into the various features of this product. Most of it is standard Word Processor/Text Editor stuff. There are functions to CUT, COPY and PASTE text; there are SEARCH and REPLACE functions; and there is a spell-checker. But let me quickly review a couple of the features that make it stand out. The font used for the display is any standard Amiga font — either bitmapped or Compugraphic. You

get to choose the font and the size. Proportional fonts are fully supported. This combination makes *PageLiner* the most legible Text Editor OR Word Processor I have seen. Legibility is a plus. You get to choose the colors for the display and you get to choose the public screen that *PageLiner* will open on. Choice is a plus. You can even set an offset (in pixels) from each side of the text window so that the text remains more legible. Once again, legibility is a plus. There are several ways to save a document from *PageLiner*. There is a standard SAVE function. When this is used, text is saved in a "standard" IFF DTXT format. I put the "standard" in quotes because, although this is supposed to be the Amiga text standard, it is rarely used. There is also a "SAVE ASCII" function that will allow the document to be saved as straight text, minus any formatting information relating to text styles, types, sizes, etc. And, of course, there is the *HotLinks* function to PUBLISH or UPDATE an EDITION. That's what this program is really all about. There is another feature in *PageLiner* that makes it perfect for working with *PageStream*. It will maintain information about the font currently in use. Font name, size and style are all maintained and displayed at the bottom of the text in a small status window. Also available in the status window is a running count of the number of words in the current document.

BME stands for BitMap Editor. This program is a bit different from any I have seen before. I think I expected a more-or-less standard Amiga paint program. This isn't it. It is specifically designed to manipulate — or, more specifically, to touch up — existing bitmaps. I can't imagine drawing anything from scratch with *BME* although it is possible. But if you have an existing picture that isn't quite right, this is probably what you need to work with it. Perhaps its strongest point is its ability to handle colors. As you probably know, *PageStream* has the ability to import pictures that contain a large number of colors. It then maintains the information about all those colors internally so that it can faithfully reproduce them later. The 16,000,000 color limit that has become somewhat of a standard in the computer industry is no problem. In order to fully support *PageStream*, *BME* has been designed to work with any number of colors as well. The actual number of colors that can be supported vary with the type of picture that is being manipulated. The table below summarizes *BME*'s capabilities.

Picture Type	Max Bitplanes	Max Colors
Black & White	1	2
Grayscale	15	32,768 (gray shades)
Palette	12	4,096 (Amiga pics)
RGB	30	1,073,741,830
CMYK	32	4,294,967,300

You may be wondering how you are able to work with pictures which contain over 4 billion colors. After all, the Amiga can only display 4,096 colors. *BME* handles the problem by displaying ALL pictures as grayscale images. Each color in the palette is converted to a grayscale

representation before display. This makes working with an image a little difficult since it's hard to know the color you are painting with or the background color you are painting on. To help things along, there is a small color-selection box that appears on the screen. In it is a close approximation of the color currently selected. It is created by using the 4,096 colors available on the Amiga and applying dithering techniques to simulate the rest. By clicking on the picture using what *BME* calls the "eyedropper" tool, you can get an idea of the colors you are working with. The magnification tool helps a great deal as well. As I said, this is not a program you are likely to use as a paint program. But I don't know of any paint programs that are capable of working with images containing over 4 billion colors. It's a tradeoff. And it's probably closer to what is needed when working with a desktop publishing package — at least until the Amiga is capable of supporting over 4 billion colors directly on the monitor.

Impressions

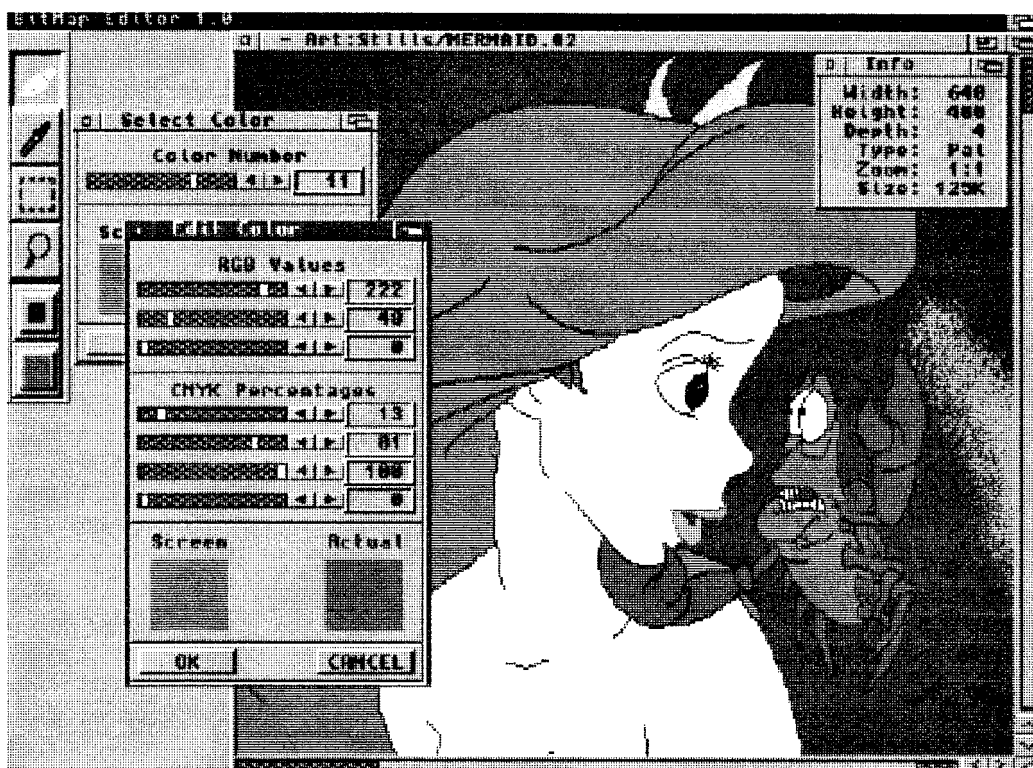
First of all, the *HotLinks* option works like a dream. The productivity gained through the ability of different programs to share data is noticeable. The real question comes down to how well the companion products, *BME* and *PageLiner*, work. *BME* is a tool that fills a very specific need. It does its job admirably although the limitations imposed by the Amiga's limited color palette make it less useful than it might be. My major complaint so far is not with what it does and how well it does it — but with what it doesn't do. I would like to have some palette alteration tools available similar to those found in *The Art Department*. It is possible to modify a palette in

BME but only a color at a time... and if you are dealing with a picture that contains over 4 billion colors, that might take a while. Many times, if I need to alter a picture after placing it in a document, it is because I need to modify the palette. Sometimes it needs to be lightened so that it is not too muddy when printed on the HP DeskJet. At other times the contrast needs to be heightened to bring out detail. *BME* doesn't provide any help in either regard. I am back to working in *The Art Department* and re-importing the modified picture just as in pre-*HotLinks* days. But perhaps my complaints are misdirected. *HotLinks* is an open architecture that other products will be able to add. I need (we all need) to write to ASDG and get them to add a *HotLinks* option to *The Art Department*.

As far as *PageLiner* is concerned, I am VERY impressed. Until now, I have used *Word Perfect* to prepare articles for the newsletter and then have imported them into *PageStream*. This month, everything you read here has been prepared using *PageLiner*. It does everything I need a "text processor" to do relative to producing the newsletter... at least everything I have come to expect so far. I mentioned earlier that the spell-checker is not the best I have seen. The fact is that I haven't used the spell-checker in *Word Perfect* for several months either. I now use *Proper Grammar* to not only check my spelling, but my grammar as well. The problem with using *Proper Grammar* in conjunction with *PageLiner* is that *Proper Grammar* can't read my edition files. Neither can it read the normal IFF DTTX files that *PageLiner* uses as its standard file format. That means I have to save the file as ASCII in order to do my spell check — and in the process, lose all my text style

markers (the bold and italic text go away). But once again I may be misdirecting my complaints. Since *HotLinks* is an open architecture, there is no reason that Softwood, Inc. (*Proper Grammar*) can't SUBSCRIBE to and UPDATE those same EDITIONS.

What a system that would make! *PageStream*, *BME*, *The Art Department*, *PageLiner*, and *Proper Grammar* all tied together and sharing data in real-time. How about getting *Deluxe Paint IV* into the loop? The possibilities kind of boggle the mind don't they? This is what multi-tasking was meant to be. ✓



This is *BME*. You can get an idea of how the palette requester works

A Large Dose of Economics

by Legrande Blount

Everyone here has seen those dramatic CD ROM games with their fluid colors, smooth motion, and intricate screens. Why don't we all have one then? Economics! Don't downplay that little word... it was enough to recently bring down the Soviet Union.

Life is full of choices. We all think we found a Gem with the Amiga. We weighed the performance of the Amiga against the IBM and MacIntosh and made the best price to performance choice. Performance, however, is relative. If, for the last 10 years, word processing has been your primary use for your computer and you have hundreds of hours working on *WordStar*, an IBM or compatible would be the best choice. If you needed to ensure compatibility with your child's schoolwork, the Apple II might be the best choice. If you stacked up several hundred dollars' worth of MacIntosh software, you'd be silly to change platforms. Not everyone buying a computer weighs just the price - performance ratio.

Business is not out to provide service free of cost... they need to make a profit to stay in business. Note: Amazing Computers. Most businesses at retail need to mark up their goods 50 to 100 %. That covers rent, electricity and overhead costs as well as pay for employees. Large companies invest in production lines, packaging, advertising and inventory, but they have to make a profit too. Some companies invest in large production lines which pay off in the long run with high demand. Commodore did this with the C-64... and with the long-term view on profits they projected a price that didn't recoup those production line costs as quickly as if the cost of each C-64 was higher. Costs were eventually recouped and a profit was made. Commodore went international to increase profits. Assembling Amigas in Taiwan reduces production costs and increases profits. There are all sorts of tricks and changes that are all designed to get a profit from the product, and that's the bottom line (figuratively speaking).

Realizing that every company along the chain of distribution needs to make a profit, we now can address why you don't have a CD ROM system. No matter how rich or poor you are, there are only so many resources. You allocate those resources (money) according to your needs and desires. Big 5th Avenue firms research to find out how much of that money you have and how much you are willing to devote to a house, a car, or an electronic device. Remembering that every link in the chain has to make a profit, the final price that you are willing to pay has to support the company and every link in the chain. (Never mourn the missing links.) Your CD ROM was caught on the slippery slope of changing conditions. To

recoup costs in a timely manner Commodore set retail pricing based on those 5th Avenue projections on what you were willing to pay. Their predictions were made in '88 or '89, maybe as late

as '90 before the Recession hit. Those projections said you were willing to spend \$500 - \$600 on an electronic gismo. Hence the cost of production needed to be \$100 - \$150 (significant guess on my part). Note of interest... Bose Sound Systems is trying to by-pass all the links marketing their new sound system — whether to increase profits or decrease costs is still under debate. Anyway, the Recession decreased the Consumer Confidence. In other words you changed your mind that now all you could afford was \$250 - \$350 for a new gismo. Face it — if they dropped the price to that level we'd all have one by now. If available at the right price, we'd all have virtual reality in 3 dimension space with a full 360 degree view and full real-time ray traced images. However, the cost would be too much. Especially compared to what you are willing to spend. The hardware to create that sort of dream machine would only be a few thousand dollars, but the links to make it happen begin to expand astronomically... software development, interface development, real-time interface coordination, specialty chip development. Somebody has to do all that and the links each need a profit. When the link needs to have a PhD in Electrical Engineering or Computer Science they get quite costly. (A lot of the basic ground work for computers came from the PhD's at NASA supporting the space program. NASA doesn't have PhD's anymore — they have Administrators. That's why nothing new is coming out of NASA.)

When the consumers en masse decide to sit on their wallets, companies have two choices: a) ride it out and stick to their prices, b) Lower the price and negotiate with the links. IBM got in bad with the links when they were 8-12 months behind on pre-paid orders then they dropped the advertised retail price below what the links had prepaid and sent notes consoling them with the words "tough luck"... thereby doing more to promote the clone business than any other influence in the industry.

You don't have a CD ROM unit because you don't want to pay for it. You're either betting Commodore will see the light and b) Lower the price or the economy will vigorously rebound leading to profit-sharing bonuses at your company and a) Your \$350 upper limit will increase to \$550. (Latest Economic Forecast: don't bet on it.)

Conversations that I follow at the user's group tend to follow the lines of where and how to get the cheapest additions and software. Amiga users with an ingrained devotion to getting the best price-performance ratio will reject *Word Perfect* for the shareware *WW* because it's a factor of several hundred dollars cheaper. *Word Perfect* doesn't have any more upgrades planned for the Amiga

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Babylon 5

Catch it on TV this fall

The POST Magazine feature story, "New Age TV Effects," by Claudia Kienzle which appears in the March 1992 issue is accompanied by a decidedly interesting sidebar called "Toasters in Space." This sidebar describes how NewTek's Toaster is being used by three Amiga workstations rendering simultaneously via an Ethernet network for Rattlesnake Productions' new science fiction television show "Babylon 5." Referred to as a "space soap," "Babylon 5" is to be distributed by Warner Bros. and is scheduled to premiere as a two-hour pilot during sweeps week this coming November.

John Copeland, producer of "Babylon 5" for this Hollywood-based company, is quoted extensively as he raves about ways in which the Toaster has significantly cut costs and afforded them the opportunity to incorporate spectacular special effects. He says, "Lightwave, the 3D software program contained within the Video Toaster, has made significant leaps in being able to achieve these sophisticated texture maps, making objects look real, with streaking, tinting and defects." He adds that Lightwave can move objects in a manner that is consistent with their mass and weight, and maintains an equal 1:1 ratio between objects of differing size and mass, like the Babylon 5 space station versus a small space craft.

Among others quoted in the article is Joe Straczynski, creator and co-executive producer of the show, who has written into the script various moves that call for things which couldn't be produced using models and miniatures, but are easily accomplished with the Toaster. "You have to consider the amount of detail that your 3D object will have," says Straczynski, "and its required rendering time. But, then again, for the cost of every day lighting and shooting models on the set, you can buy another Amiga."

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Economics

Continued From Page 6

version. They can't pay the links and still make a profit. IBM and MacIntosh machines are getting their multimedia costs in line with the Amiga alternative. Let's see, if you're going to chance effort on developing new software or hardware are you going to aim at 3 million Amigas or 50 million MS DOS types. The Toaster doesn't even advertise their Amiga link — note they do claim controlability from the Mac or IBM. We might find ourselves orphaned. Don't believe that Economics has no power — like I said to start with, it brought down the Soviet Union. The Amiga community is but a pittance. ✓

Dallas Video Festival

A Call for artists

The Dallas Video Festival returns for its sixth year November 5-8, presented by the Video Association of Dallas and the Dallas Museum of Art, with assistance from USA Film Festival, at the Dallas Museum of Art.

The Dallas Video Festival has grown to be one of the largest video festivals in the United States, and, like the medium it celebrates, the 1992 Festival will be more diversified than ever. "Video has grown into much more than television as it's usually defined," says Festival Director Barton Weiss. "It's becoming a new language, the language of the 21st century."

The Festival even-handedly shows the state of the medium — as art, as entertainment, as document, as archive, and as commerce. Programs are presented simultaneously in four separate areas within the museum, and a day pass ticket encourages Festival-goers to move from room to room, giving audiences the opportunity to create their own viewing schedule.

This far-reaching approach has included programs as diverse as: *Don From Lakewood*, a hilarious work made on a toy camcorder, to a panel discussion on the public's use of video cameras as surveillance; from the first hour MTV ever aired, to Marlon Rigg's *Color Adjustment*, his eloquent study of racial conflict in prime time TV; from the US premiere of *Project A-ko*, stunning Japanese animation, to the wry *The Japanese Version*, a study of Japan's (mis)appropriation of popular American culture; from Siggraph, the latest in dazzling computer animation, to toy commercials from the '50s and '60s; from the classic *I Love Lucy* to *I'm From Hollywood*, a chronicle of the rise and fall of Andy Kaufman's career as a professional wrestler.

The Festival also offers programs that have become Festival mainstays since their introduction in 1986 — KIDVID programs and workshops for children; a broad look at current works by national and international independent producers; *The Texas Show*, featuring new work by Texas artists; and refreshments in the TV Diner.

WHERE: Dallas Museum of Art, 1717 N. Harwood

WHEN: Thursday, Nov. 5 thru Sunday, Nov. 8

TICKETS: All-Festival Pass \$22;

Day pass: Thursday and Friday \$6
Saturday and Sunday \$8

KIDVID programs \$5

INFO: Video Association of Dallas, (214) 651-8888

ATTENTION ARTISTS: For those interested in entering their work in the event, the call for entries are due August 17, 1992. ✓



Free Monitors!

For a limited time, Commodore is offering a free monitor when you buy selected machines. With the purchase of any Amiga 3000, you get a free 1950 Multisync monitor. Or, get any Amiga 2x00 (2000, 2000HD, 2000HD Pro, or 2500) and get a free 1084S monitor. This is a limited time offer, so come in today!

Class Itinerary for April, May, June, & July

April 11	Introduction to Desktop Publishing
April 25	Introduction to Desktop Video
May 9	Deluxe Paint IV
May 23	Introduction to Amiga Hard Drives
June 6	Imagine Animation
June 20	CanDo V1.6
July 11	Introduction to Amiga
July 25	Introduction to AmigaDOS

All classes will be held on alternating Saturdays, from 7-9 PM. Cost is \$25 per person. Space is limited, so sign up now!

If you have any suggestions, or a class you'd like to attend, please give us a call at 960-8633. We want to meet your needs!

Plan Now For The Party Of The Year!

June 6 is a day that we plan to celebrate as much (if not more) than July 4! One year ago, on that very day, The Edge Computer & Video opened its doors. We're planning a party the likes of which the Amiga community of Dallas/Fort Worth has NEVER seen before. If you were lucky enough to come to our Grand Openings, you know we can throw a party! Wait 'til you see what we're gonna do for our anniversary. More details as they develop, but for now, mark the 6th of June for the

EDGE Computer & Video One Year Anniversary BASH!



The EDGE Has The Lowest GVP Prices ●_(period)

By now, the point has been made that the EDGE Computer & Video offers you the greatest savings on GVP G-Force boards. Again, all you need to do to take advantage of these incredible savings is to put down a 20% deposit and we'll have it on its way! Delivery takes only 2 days in most cases.

	Retail	Edge Price
G-Force 25MHz/1MB	\$749.00	\$628.95
G-Force 40MHz/4MB	\$1399.00	\$1101.95
w/ 52M Quantum	\$1649.00	\$1311.95
w/ 120 Quantum	\$1799.00	\$1416.95
w/ 240 Quantum	\$2049.00	\$1636.95
G-Force 50MHz/4MB	\$1799.00	\$1458.95
w/ 52M Quantum	\$2069.00	\$1657.95
w/ 120 Quantum	\$2199.00	\$1762.95
w/ 240 Quantum	\$2499.00	\$1983.95
A500 Series 2		
w/ 120 Quantum	\$699.00	\$607.95
w/ 240 Quantum	\$1109.00	\$870.95
A2000 Series 2		
w/ 120 Quantum	\$599.00	\$513.95
w/ 240 Quantum	\$949.00	\$796.95
A3000 68040/2MB	\$2799.00	\$1889.95
		New Low Price!

The EDGE II Now Has PCs!

The EDGE Computer & Video II in Irving now has a select line of top-quality IBM PC clones. These '386 & '486 systems are specially priced to compete with the big "warehouse stores". The Irving store is also carrying a growing line of PC software to complement these machines. So come on in and talk to John or David about these extraordinary values.

Amiga Library News

Public domain and shareware picks
from Bill Raecke

NickPrefs by Nicola Salmoria

This is for those with AmigaOS 2.0. What it does is enhance *IPrefs*, the preferences manager to add three new preference features. What you do to install it is to add the program *NickPrefs* to your c: directory and add the command *NickPrefs* to your startup-sequence immediately following the *IPrefs* command. Then you copy the three *NickPrefs* preference setting programs to your SYS:Prefs drawer, and off you go. Simple enough.

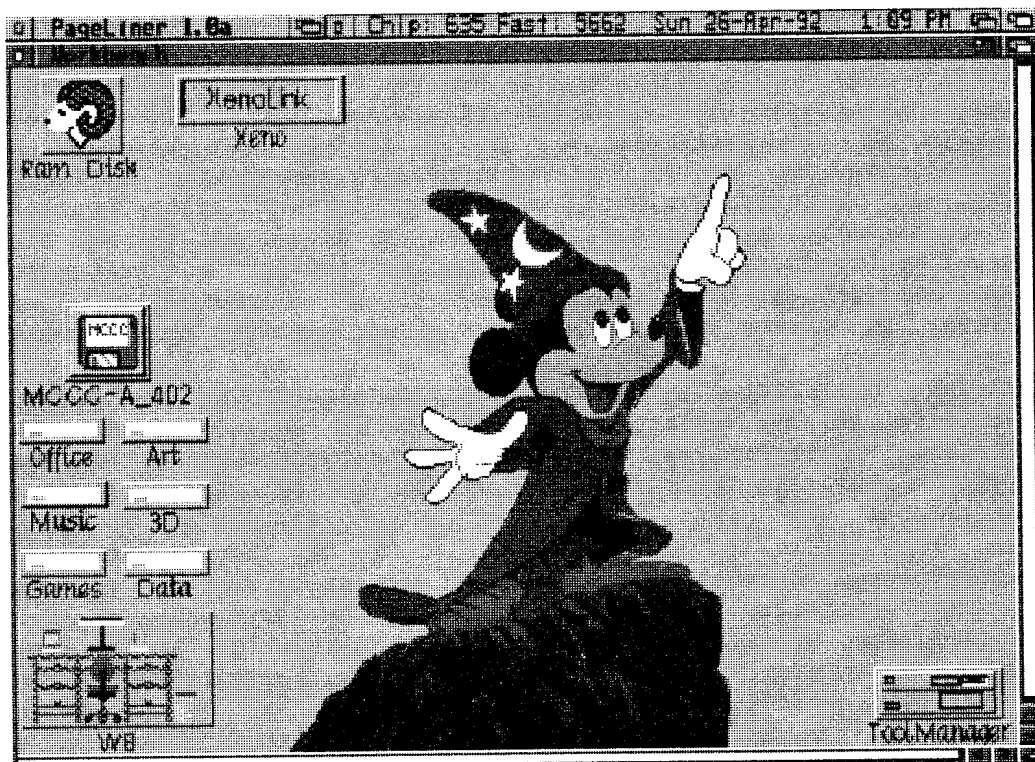
As for the new settings, *WBPicure* is probably the most impressive of the three. It allows you to display any IFF picture in the main Workbench window, replacing the standard *WBPatten* option. More information on that in a minute. Almost as impressive is the *BusyPointer* preference setting. This one allows you to design your own animated busy pointer to replace the little watch. Several are included with the *NickPrefs* distribution including my personal favorite, "SandGlass" which is an hourglass design. The sand falls from the top of the hourglass to the bottom and then the hourglass turns over to repeat the process. It's much more interesting than the standard busy pointer. The third option is called *Floppy*. It allows you to modify the public fields of trackdisk. Suggestion: don't mess with them. But there is also a no-click option built in that works quite well — and even allows you to turn the click on or off for individual drives. This might work well in a situation where some of your drives cannot have their click turned off... in which case it's best (for the safety of your hardware) not to use the no-click option. If you have AmigaOS 2.0, you need this. And you'll find it on MCCC-A_394.

WB-Pics by Bill Raecke

A moment ago I promised more information on the *WBPicure* option of *NickPrefs*. This is it. I was very impressed with the look I could get

by using *NickPrefs* to replace my Workbench background color or pattern with a picture, but two problems showed up.

The first problem had to do with colors. When *NickPrefs* replaces the background with a picture, it allows two options: to leave the palette as is, or to use the picture's palette. Leaving the palette as is normally ruins whatever picture you display — changing the palette to the picture's palette normally renders your Workbench unreadable. Until *NickPrefs* I was using an 8-color Workbench that I was quite happy with... so I decided to see what I could do with a 16-color Workbench. What would happen if I kept the first 8 colors the way they were (pleasant and very legible) and reserved the second 8 colors for whatever picture I wanted to display? It turns out that this is a very workable option. The effort comes in modifying the pictures. Here's how it's done. First I take the pictures into *The Art Department*. I make sure that they are 640 x 400 and scale them to that size if they aren't. Then I reduce them to 8-colors. Normally a dithering routine is necessary to achieve good results although sometimes (especially for cartoon characters) it



*This is a screen capture of my Workbench
The picture is called Fantasia
I removed the dark background and left just Mickey*

is best to turn dithering off. Then I save the 8-color picture to disk. Then I fire up *PixMate*. I use *PixMate* to add back one bitplane (turn it into a 16-color picture again). Then I use the PACK COLORS option to turn all unused color settings to white. What I have at this point is a 16-color picture where only the first 8 colors are used. What I want is the second 8 colors used. I use *PixMate*'s Palette requester to SWAP colors. I SWAP color 1 with color 9, color 2 with color 10, etc. Then I change colors 1 and 3-8 to a gray and I change color 2 to black. Then I look at colors 15 and 16. These colors should be contrasting colors because they will be the two colors used for menus. If they are not highly contrasted, SWAP two of the colors between 9 and 16 to make them so. Then save the picture again. The only other thing to watch out for is to avoid overly dark pictures (since your black text on Workbench still needs to show up). Sometimes it is possible to cut out a portion of a picture and use that to avoid problems. When the palette is set, you need to set a Workbench palette to match and then save that palette. Then you need to save a WBPpicture setting file as well to call in the picture at will.

The second problem had to do with picture selection. Selecting a picture after the fact takes all the fun out of it. What was needed is a way to randomly select a picture at boot time and display it. This turned out to be a relatively painless process. I simply wrote a simple ARExx program to handle this and added it to my user-startup script.

So much for the process. What you will find on this month's disks are two collections of pictures that I have modified to look good as Workbench pictures. Also included in each collection are the ARExx program and the WBPpicture setting and Palette files necessary to make it all go. As you have probably figured out from the explanation so far, you will have to be running a 16-color, interlaced Workbench in order to properly use these pictures and settings. The two collections are on MCCC-A_398 and MCCC-A_399.

PC-Task by Chris Hames

PC-Task is an MS-DOS (IBM) emulator. In other words, it allows you to run IBM software on your Amiga. This is not the first of these we have seen, but this appears to be the best — or at least the easiest to use. Getting started couldn't be easier. With AmigaDOS 1.2 or 1.3 you need to run a little program called TDPatch1213. Then, whether in AmigaDOS 1.2, 1.3 or 2.0, you run PC-TaskDemo. Then you insert a 720K MS-DOS bootable disk into DF0: and you're off and running. You'll find that PC-Task is multi-tasking, so you don't give up your Amiga — the IBM just runs in a window.

The version of *PC-Task* available here is just a demo version. Writing to any disk file is not allowed, nor is printing or serial port control. To get these features, along with a version optimized for accelerated machines, you need to become a registered owner, which you can do for \$40. I don't normally write about semi-disabled programs in this column since I don't fully approve of that

means of distribution, but in this case the program is useful enough that you just might need to know about it. If you have a need for this kind of thing it's worth your time to check this one out. It's on MCCC-A_397.

Public Screen Utilities by Chris Papademetrious

With AmigaOS 2.0 it is possible to open up public screens and then have other programs open on those new public screens. This is something I knew was possible — it's just something that I didn't realize I had a need for... until now. Thanks to the documentation provided with this package, I can now open a public screen that is 640 x 640 and have *PageStream* open on it. 640 x 640 may seem an odd size, but it turns out to be just what is needed to display a full 8.5 x 11 document at the "Full Width" view option setting. Using the AmigaOS 2.0 "AutoScroll" feature, when the pointer is moved to the bottom of the screen, the screen scrolls so that you can see that portion. That means that I can now move around more freely without having to constantly wait for *PageStream*'s screen refreshes. All that is necessary is to issue the commands (from a shell or a script):

```
Openscreen PGS 2 hires lace width 640 height 640 autoscroll
Screenflags shanghai pop default PGS
```

Then start *PageStream* with the Workbench screen option. Instead of opening on the Workbench, *PageStream* will open on the PGS screen. There are probably a lot of other applications for this that I haven't thought about as yet. When you think of them please let me know. Check out MCCC-A_402.

ProWrite v 3.2.3 by New Horizons Software, Inc.

No, this isn't a new version of *ProWrite* available on a club disk. It's a patch to upgrade your *ProWrite* software to version 3.2.3 from either 3.2.0, 3.2.1, or 3.2.2. It's distributed by New Horizons Software so it's all legal. This is becoming an increasingly popular way for software companies to upgrade their products since it reduces their costs for what would normally be a handling-charge-only upgrade and it eliminates the handling charge for their customers. A win/win situation. This upgrade is on MCCC-A_397.

Thought For The Month



*If only one could get that
wonderful feeling of accomplishment
without having to accomplish anything*

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga By-The-Loop

Pete Good

The April Amiga By-The-Loop meeting, at the North Richland Hills Community Center, was back in our normal room this month.

The meeting was kicked off by our president, David Owens, mentioning the various up and coming activities of the MCCC, from the Spring Thing at Grapevine Lake, to the Beginner's SIG (Tarrant County) moving to the third Saturday in the month.

Our ever-popular librarian (Gary Campbell) carries the club disks and his A2000 to the meeting in a very dapper carrying case... unfortunately this month the A2000 was carried upside down. He definitely does not recommend this method of transportation, since his HardFrame disk controller cleverly removed itself from the expansion slot causing an unexpected "Insert V2.0 Workbench" requester! A screwdriver and patience allowed the copying of disks to proceed in a more nonchalant manner.

After many questions concerning various parts of the Amiga's anatomy were asked and answered, David released the meeting to The Edge for a demonstration of Video Toaster 2.0. Actually to John Chang who is the store manager at the Edge's Irving Branch.

How, you may ask, can I do justice to an amazing demonstration of Amiga video power sing mere words? Well the simple answer is that I can't. With so many different effects available with the Video Toaster, a 16 million color paint program, the Toaster Character Generator, LightWave 3D and ChromaF/X, I have to tell you that you really should have been at the meeting. If you were not there then, apart from "why not?", you must go see it at one of our local dealers. The Edge will be more than happy to give

you a full demonstration.

The evening ended with several door prizes from two of our local dealers: The Edge donated some T-Shirts, Edge Advantage Cards and a slew of unsold European Cover Disks (thanks Edge) and Ansoft Data Systems donated some Free VHS Video rentals (thanks Ansoft). The lucky prize winners were:

- Larry Blair, Nathan Gilchrist — T-Shirt winners.

- Tom Johnson, Robyn Wilson (IBM????) and Carl Kerry — Edge Advantage card winners.

- Rick Schulz and Gary Routh — Ansoft Video Rentals.

The CoverDisks were handed out to those that remained at the end of the meeting. Which was pretty much everyone who saw the presentation.

Congratulations to all our winners and many thanks to our local dealers for their generosity.

The Loop chapter hopes to see you all at our next meeting in May when we will have a presentation of ParNET or how to link two computers together easily.

Amiga Central

Ray Howard

This month's meeting began with the announcement of our annual Spring Thing to be held on May 16th at Silverlake Park in the Grapevine Lake area. Look in this newsletter for a map and details.

Our question and answer discussion covered several diverse topics ranging from using DPaint in a 1 Mb machine to accelerator options for the Amiga. Harold Williams explained for the benefit of our new users the differences between a megabyte of RAM and a megabyte of hard disk storage. Tips on using modems and the BBS were

discussed between several members.

The rumors and product announcement section turned again to accelerator cards and a \$995 special deal from the company RCS on their 68040 accelerator for the 2000. A few members mentioned that Supra was to have started shipping their new 9600 baud v.32 FAX modems. Also announced was the availability of a minor *Deluxe Paint IV* upgrade to IV.1 from Electronic Arts. The upgrade has support for faster tinting and anti-aliasing, full-screen morphs, and scaleable fonts. Contact Electronic Arts for the details on upgrading the program.

Harold showed us a program that he is developing to easily generate 3D fonts or titles using *Pixel-3D* for use in *Lightwave* and *Imagine* animations. The program was developed using *CanDo* and *ARexx* to generate brushes and control *Pixel-3D*. The font generator allows the user control of the manner in which *Pixel-3D* will generate the objects. The user interface looked great which comes as no surprise from the creator of our SuperDisk collection of easy to use software. Next month Scott Lamb has been invited to show us some of the projects he is working on for his new, CDTV specific company. Don't forget to be there on the third Thursday in May!

Amiga North Dallas

Genny White

As our chapter met on Taxes Due Night, attendance was a bit lighter than usual. Still, we had enough of a crowd for the general animated discussion of rumors and tidbytes. Major Rumor: Nintendo has bought out Commodore. Ahem... one might assume this was an April Fools joke run amok, although we hear there's a lot of chatter about it on various BBSs. Perhaps a more

CHAPTER NEWS

solid rumor: if you hear of a \$25 2.0 upgrade ROM, it is NOT AUTHORIZED. Doesn't include manuals, etc., and it will violate your warranty to install one, as only dealers are authorized to do so. Looking for info magazine? Seems it's "on hold", not entirely gone yet. The Irving Edge store kept turning away so many people looking for PCs that they now carry them. If you can't sell 'em an Amiga, sell 'em what they want. They'll learn. Rumor: new Edge opening in Arlington. Non-rumor: popular musical artist Paula Abdul is using an Amiga in some of her audio and video productions. Like dungeon adventuring? *Black Crypt* is recommended. Seen in Europe by Jim O'Flaherty: the A600 (unexpandable A500-style machine, cheaper, with 2.1 AmigaDOS). We heard about so many SIGs I may miss a few: the Toaster SIG is now the Dallas Toaster Society; the Beginners SIG is starting up in two parts of town, the Art SIG meets up here in Plano, the Vid SIG meets at Simuflite, and the Programmer SIG seems to be asleep... those who want to crank it back up again, meet at the meeting and get going! Look elsewhere in the newsletter for specifics on all of the above. Here's a request from me: I'm looking for ideas for classes needed or offered for

our membership. Unlike a demo, where you get the flavor of a product or feature but not quite enough to dive into it on your own, a class is a hands-on learning experience. We have some folks with a lot of experience who can help those of us who don't. What would you like to have a workshop on? This is a CLUB-WIDE appeal, not just for my chapter. Call me with suggestions or offers of your own talents.

Our demo for the evening was a presentation of the new INOVAtronics HiQ A500 Tower, the company's first venture into hardware, shown to us by Jim O'Flaherty. INOVAtronics, maker of the popular *CanDo* and *Directory Opus* products, found a need to give A500 owners a way to expand to A2000 power without the A2000 price. The tower (it would have been quite handsome with its skins on) gives you a video slot, an A2000 CPU slot, a 250 watt power supply (expandable to 350), three PC-compatible slots, and a speaker inside the case. Three buttons on the case are power, reset (one button instead of Ctrl-Comm-Amiga!), and "Turbo" (turns on/off your accelerator card, if you have one). The motherboard, floppy drive, mouse and keyboard are standard A500 equipment. Commodore doesn't mind if you pull your A500 apart and

set it up in the Tower... after all, you paid for the A500... but your warranty sorta goes pffft. Yep, the toaster DOES fit. The Tower will be available soon, but response has been so great that gearing up for production is taking a bit longer than planned. You can probably buy the HiQ Tower as a "kit" and do-it-yourself, or (if that scares you silly) you can get it assembled by pros. I didn't understand some of the questions being asked that night, much less the answers, but judging from the enthusiasm and response I'd say People Who Know are very pleased and excited about this product. Thanks, Jim!

Next month: Danny Barnett will share with us the art of digitizing and editing your own sounds, using MIDI's and synthesizers, etc. Come to the meeting May 20 and witness "Hunting the Wild Audio Beast" [insert Dr. Seuss illustration here]. Will we all be sunburned from the Spring Thing? Please come! No, I haven't forgotten the door prizes: we thank Metropolitan Computer Products for several games, *Championship Run*, *Quadralien*, *William Tell*, and *Nitro*, and also thank The Edge for *Bequest*, *Paperboy II* (brand new!!), *Pixel 3D* (1.1), and two special "Advant-Edge" discount cards. While thanking people, I must slip in a word to our

We have the pavilion at Silver Lake Campground reserved on May 16 from 10am to 6pm. We must all leave by 9 pm unless staying the night in the campground.

There will be a cookout from 11:30am to 1:30pm. During that time, the MCCC will supply charcoal for the fire, paper goods, ice and soft drinks. Bring your own meat and please bring a covered dish (potato salad, cole slaw, baked beans or the like) to share.

A PICNIC IN THE PARK

Silverlake Campground Pavilion
Lake Grapevine
Saturday, May 16

Water and rest rooms are available. There is a horseshoe pit, a volleyball area, a boat ramp and a playground. No amplified music is allowed. Pets must be on a leash. No glass containers are allowed. Beverages and condiments in cans or plastic only.

Exit north on Main Street from Highway 114/121. Continue to dead end at Highway 26/Business 114. Turn right (east). Proceed to Dooley Street (traffic light with Whataburger on the northwest corner) and turn left (north). Look for Silver Lake Campground entrance on the left. Pavilion is on the left. Hope to see you there.

CHAPTER NEWS

Pres & V.P.: thanks for making your secretary's day on Secretary's Day!

Arl/Grand Prairie

Brad Dumlér

Due to unforeseen circumstances once again, the Arlington/Grand Prairie chapter was not able to have a program on the "Wonderful World of C128s" in April. The meeting was held at Blake & Dorothy Brown's home. Those attending were fortunate to witness our chapter president, Foster McCowan, go through the installation procedure for GEOS 128 v2 on Blake's system. There was certainly a great deal of useful and valuable information shared about setting up GEOS and using it.

As of the date of submitting this report, the chapter has not confirmed that we can hold our May meeting at the Grand Prairie library, so please contact Foster McCowan at (214) 480-0765 or check the club BBS for a message about where it will be held. A topic of business for our chapter to discuss in May is the need for us to recruit another chapter officer to fulfill the MCCC constitutional requirements. Until then, happy computing.

Fort Worth

Mary Louise Hagemeyer

Our new meeting room at TCOM is really nice, and it was good to see the old faithful crew augmented by new members and visitors. The newcomers had questions about putting their computers to work, which led to a discussion of modems and terminal programs.

John Burt demonstrated disk #128, titled "Logic and Probability". We tried an I.Q. test, where we learned that answering one question correctly out of twenty produces an I.Q. of 80. The disk includes some old favorites such as *Labyrinth* and *Mastermind*. He also discussed #341, Diskette File Copy, an old-style copying program which has the advantage of allowing editing of files and directories.

Our next meeting will be May 9, 1:30 p.m., in Room 540 at TCOM. Bring questions or your favorite programs.

H.E.B.

Robyn Wilson

At the April meeting we had a new visitor, Brandon Robinson, and

he gave a demonstration of how to use a telecommunications program. One of our members could not diagnose whether her program or modem was not working properly and Brandon offered to help. This is a reminder that this is one of the meanings of our club — to help you with problems of any sort.

Our main program was on S.A.M., the Software Automated Mouth. I discussed how it was used in conjunction with *The Write Stuff* Word Processor. S.A.M. reads your poems and stories and other documents to you. There was a suggestion to make S.A.M. be able to read Bingo numbers off. We are still working to make that possible. He can read the numbers and letters, but we need to work on a random number program to go with the sound.

Our next meeting is on May 2nd at the Hurst Recreation Center. The June 6th meeting will there also, both meetings at the usual 1:30 pm. The July meeting is still pending. Please check the back of the newsletter for the most recent update. We have planned demos of how to change your 1541 disk drive from "8" to "9", and how to use the library, and much more for future meetings.

These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members

Be sure to show your membership card

Action Computer

C64, C128, Amiga Repair
244 Webbs Chapel Village
Dallas, Texas 75229
(214) 484-7838

ANSOFT Data Systems

Amiga Software & Hardware
925 University
Fort Worth, Texas
(817) 870-2529

The Edge Computer & Video II

Amiga Software &
Hardware
3201 W. Airport Frwy.
Suite 100
Irving, Texas 75062
(214) 570-1300

The Edge Computer & Video

Amiga Software & Hardware
14540 Beltwood Pkwy # 4
Dallas, Texas 75244
(214) 960-8633

Metropolitan Computer

Amiga Software & Hardware
4372 Spring Valley
Dallas, Texas 75244
(214) 702-9119

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$24 per year or \$15 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — \$36 (\$96); Half Page — \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page — \$12 (\$32); Business Card — \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles should be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga WordPerfect format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as Amiga IFF files, PageStream structured drawings, Professional Draw clips, or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News may be obtained for \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded to the club along with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Saturday	MCCC Board of Directors
1st Saturday	HEB Chapter
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Tuesday	Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
2nd Thursday	Amiga West Chapter
2nd Saturday	Fort Worth Chapter
2nd Saturday	Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
3rd Wednesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter

SIGS

Toaster Society	Brett Hester	214-233-5493
VidSIG	Jack Smith	817-924-9289

MCCC Board of Directors

President	Ray Howard	214-660-4819
Vice President	David Owens	817-577-2304
Treasurer	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
Secretary	John Malmstrom	817-282-6158
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125
(C64/128 help)	Joe Ostrokol	817-534-1990
Education Chair	Genny White	214-422-7131
BBS Coordinator	Okley Moss	817-282-7751
Newsletter Editor	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Past President	Craig Bird	817-540-3360
BBS Numbers	817-268-4191	817-268-4196

MCCC Chapter Officers

Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

President	David Owens	817-577-2304
Vice President	Joanna Owens	817-577-2304
Treasurer	Bruce Nelson	817-498-0899
Secretary	Pete Goad	817-496-0509
Librarian	Gary Campbell	817-297-4125

Amiga Central Chapter

President	Harold Williams	817-483-0537
Vice President	Johnny Kitchens	817-649-8632
Treasurer	Bill Raecke	817-465-2014
Secretary	Ray Howard	214-660-4819
Librarian	Ned Kelly	817-277-5825

Amiga North Dallas Chapter

President	Henry Ribron	214-826-3208
Vice President	Brett Hester	214-233-5493
Treasurer	Gus Reiter	214-644-1072
Secretary	Genny White	214-422-7131
Librarian	Wm. Dockendorf	214-407-0564

Amiga West Chapter

President	Jack Smith	817-924-9289
Vice President	Robert Carroll	817-560-3926
Treasurer	Wayne Brodnax	817-244-0828
Secretary	Ben Clingerman	817-346-7266
Librarian	Doug Gaudin	817-367-2640

Arlington-Grand Prairie Chapter

President	Foster McCowen	214-480-0765
Vice President	Foster McCowen	214-480-0765
Treasurer	Brad Dumler	817-483-2322
Secretary	Brad Dumler	817-483-2322
Librarian	Glen Herring	817-572-0489

Fort Worth Chapter

President	John Sookma	817-293-8691
Vice President	John Burt	817-441-8115
Treasurer	Julia Sookma	817-293-8691
Secretary	M.L. Hagemeyer	817-732-0982
Librarian	James Dunnam	817-923-6153

Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter

President	Robyn Wilson	817-428-5530
Vice President	Carol Cappa	817-267-9114
Treasurer	Jesse Carden	817-838-9530
Secretary	Robyn Wilson	817-428-5530
Librarian	Bill Worthington	817-834-6150

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | | | |
|--------|---|--------|--|
| May 9 | Fort Worth Chapter
1:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth | May 21 | Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington |
| May 9 | Arlington/Grand Prairie Workshop
1:30 pm — Blake Brown's Home (214-641-0424)
2009 Cypress Ct., Grand Prairie | May 23 | Amiga Beginner's SIG
10:00 am — Metropolitan Computer Products
4372 Spring Valley, Dallas |
| May 12 | Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills | May 28 | VidSIG
7:30 pm — SimuFlite
2929 W. Airfield Drive, DFW Airport |
| May 12 | Arlington/Grand Prairie Chapter
6:30 pm — Grand Prairie Public Library
Conover Drive, Grand Prairie | May 30 | Amiga Beginner's SIG
10:00 am — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills |
| May 14 | Amiga West Chapter
7:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth | May 31 | Dallas Toaster Society
3:00 pm — Metropolitan Computer Products
4372 Spring Valley, Dallas |
| May 16 | Spring Thing
10:00 am — Silverlake Campground Pavilion
Lake Grapevine, Grapevine | Jun 6 | MCCC Board of Directors
10:00 am — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills |
| May 20 | Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — Richardson Civic Center
411 West Arapaho, Richardson | Jun 6 | Hurst-Euless-Bedford Chapter
1:30 pm — Hurst Recreation Center
Mary Drive South of Pipeline, Hurst |

June Newsletter Deadline — 7am, May 23

MCCC NEWS

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